

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Methods and apparatus for facilitating an exchange of ferrous, non-ferrous and platinum group metals via an electronic network are disclosed. In operation, an authorized metal seller uploads information about one or more physical lots of metal and/or one or more derivative contracts to an exchange server. In addition, the metal seller may upload information about preexisting credit relationships he has established with certain metal buyers. Subsequently, an authorized metal buyer downloads the information. Although the metal seller's identity is preferably unknown to the metal buyer, an icon is placed next to each metal lot which belongs to a metal seller who has a preexisting credit relationship with the metal buyer. In addition, the metal buyer may access other information and services such as price indices, hedging, and financing, from within the same web site or from a separate web site. If the metal buyer purchases a metal lot and/or a derivative contract, the appropriate accounts are updated and the parties are informed. In addition, the buyer and/or the seller may receive updated portfolio valuations and/or mark to market analysis. Importantly, the process provides complete price transparency for ferrous, non-ferrous and platinum group metals and allows for the exchange of metals derivative contracts which are cash settled and fully compliant with FAS133. The end result for users of the system is the ability to negotiate and lock in a fixed price for a forward delivery of a specific metal alloy through a single online location. As a result, volatility of profit margins is reduced.